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SECURITY COUNCIL
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Letter dated 26 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of an appeal by the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation addressed to the parliaments of all countries, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, concerning the missile and bomber strikes carried out by NATO against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 28, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

Annex

APPEAL BY THE FEDERATION COUNCIL OF THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE PARLIAMENTS OF ALL COUNTRIES, THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION, THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE, AND THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

On 24 March 1999, combined military forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) carried out missile and bomber strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There have been casualties among the population and many civilian facilities have been damaged. Plans are being made for new, more powerful strikes. NATO is attempting in this way to compel a sovereign and independent State - the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - to change its internal governmental and constitutional structure and to force it to accept the deployment in its territory of foreign forces, namely the forces of NATO.

This is a blow to the foundations of the existing international order and the rule of law and a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of the universally accepted norms and principles of international law. Attempts to justify these missile and bomber strikes by referring to "the prevention of a humanitarian catastrophe" are utterly without foundation.

The experience of recent decades, including that of Europe, shows that attempts by military blocs to use force to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States have yielded nothing except a widening of the sphere of conflict and new sufferings for the people. Nothing whatsoever in international law provides a basis for conduct of this kind.

Today NATO presumes to judge and punish Yugoslavia, but tomorrow the threat may be directed against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of any other country, which may find itself the target of the use or threat of force as a result of the arbitrary and unilateral decision of one or another group of States seeking to achieving some specific aim.

In essence, the North Atlantic alliance has usurped the power of the United Nations Security Council. NATO has even violated its own Charter, which authorizes the use of force by the alliance only in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The present unilateral action by NATO runs counter to an entire series of decisions and measures adopted by the Contact Group, OSCE and the United Nations, on the basis of which determined efforts have been made in recent months to bring about a settlement of the Kosovo crisis by political means.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation underscores the special responsibility of the parliaments of the member countries of North Atlantic Treaty Organization for their de facto endorsement

of this act of aggression by NATO against a sovereign State Member of the United Nations.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation calls upon the parliaments of all countries, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States to recognize all the grave consequences of this armed aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which may become irreversible and result in the destruction of a world order that has been built up by sacrifice over many generations.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation appeals to parliamentarians to spare no effort - before it is too late - to put an immediate end to this military and political madness, to prevent the aggressors from crossing a fateful threshold, and to revert to the search for a political settlement of the Kosovo crisis.

Moscow
26 March 1999